

February 17, 1959

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(TO BE OPENED BY AMBASSADOR ONLY)~~

Dear Fritz:

I have been reading with great interest the thoughtful papers that you and Joe Wolf prepared on February 5 and February 9, respectively, and which Joe brought to my attention in his letter of February 13.

The following comments are of course preliminary only, as I can not pretend to have digested and thought through all of the implications of your combined papers. There are, however, several aspects of the proposal outlined in the subparagraphs of your paragraph 1 which are not clear to me and I therefore thought I would send off to you now these purely interim thoughts.

I can of course conceive, as you can, of a proposal with respect to Berlin which would go very far toward protecting Western security interests (in their political and psychological, as well as military, aspects), and also the position of the West Berliners. If the territory of West Berlin, and a land and air corridor (or corridors), were ceded to the Federal Republic (satisfactory arrangements would also have to be made for train paths), and if the NATO guarantees were thus extended to West Berlin (as they would be, since West Berlin would be part of the Federal Republic), then the occupation regime could and would be ended, and the troops of the Three Powers would presumably be replaced by troops of the Federal Republic. All of this could of course only be done by agreement with the USSR, and part of the price that would have to be paid would be recognition of the so-called GDR. From the practical point of view, however, the chances of the Soviets entering into such an arrangement are, in my judgment, nil. The Soviets are presently attempting to "de-Westernize" West Berlin and to absorb it, as quickly as possible, into the Soviet orbit. The foregoing proposal would involve a revised explicit legal recognition by the Soviets of the Western presence in Berlin. I am also inclined to think that certain important segments of Western opinion

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opinion (I am particularly worried about the softness of British public opinion) would not view this proposal as a reasonable one, merely because of its obvious unacceptability to the Soviets. While such a proposal would be "bold" as you say, I am not sure that it would have much real public impact.

I have assumed that the foregoing is what you have in mind. On the other hand, in your subparagraph D, you speak of the Federal Republic taking over responsibility for West Berlin through arrangements with the U.S., the U.K. and France (and no mention is made of ceding the territory of West Berlin to the Federal Republic). If you are envisaging unilateral Western action to turn over responsibility to the Federal Republic (i.e., not in agreement with the USSR), then such action would rest on no more legal a base than would similar unilateral action by the USSR to turn over its responsibilities to the so-called GDR, which turnover we have already served notice we will refuse to recognize.

There is of course nothing new in what I have said, but I merely wanted to give you my immediate reaction to the two possible courses of action that could be deduced from your paragraph 1.

With warmest regards,

As ever,

B. R. L. Thomas

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